

FEATURE

#FEES MUST FALL

Not since the 1976 student uprising has South Africa seen such a marvellous demonstration of the might of youth. The **UNCUT** team explores the **#FeesMustFall** protests which advocates for free education for all

The #FeesMustFall protests saw thousands of university students standing together all over South Africa, advocating for free education.

What started out as a protest against an increase in tuition fees at the University of the Witwatersrand in October, soon became an ongoing call for the South African government to make right on its promise that doors of learning and culture shall be opened.

Despite a full-on media campaign closely following every development of the protest which spread

quickly to various university campuses across the country, including the University of Cape Town and North West University students' cries seemed to fall on unwavering ears. But, the

bold determination (and utter desperation) of the students propelled them to take their concerns to Parliament and the Union Buildings despite the threat of police brutality witnessed on the news and across social media platforms throughout the week.

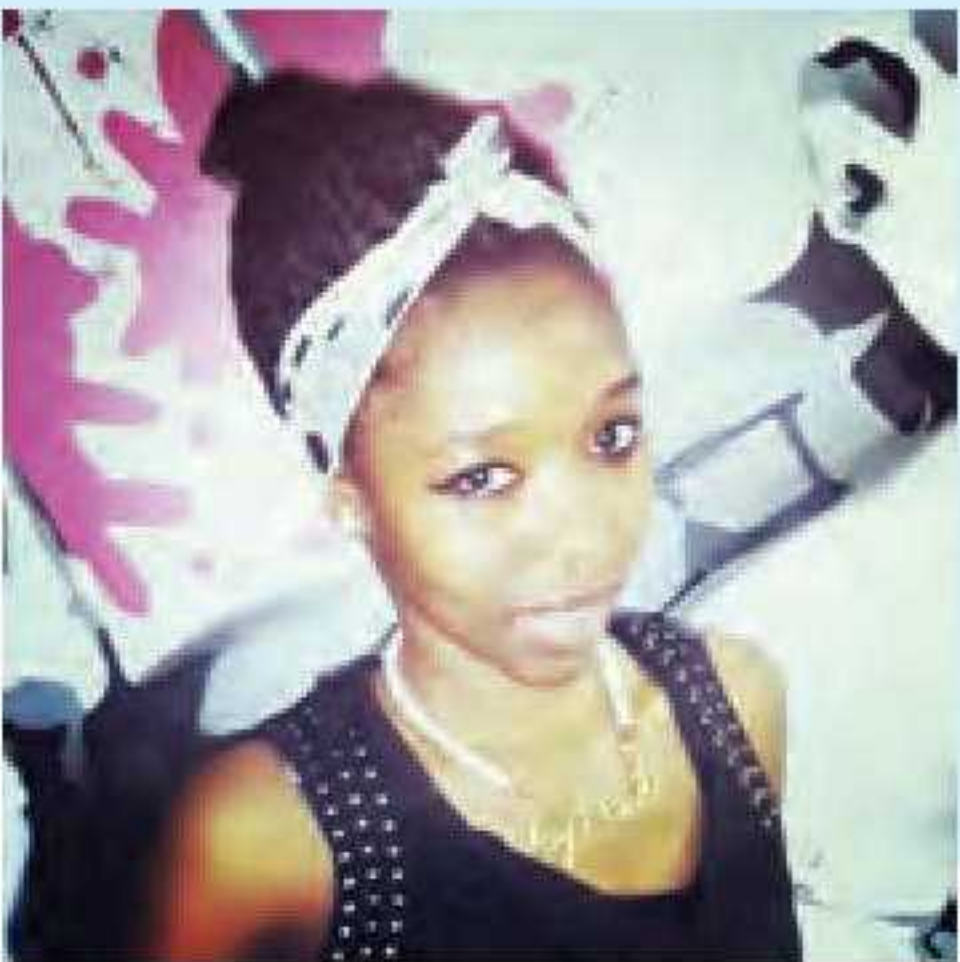
Student protesters brought the country to a standstill. They got South Africans actively engaging on issues of access to education, race and a failing student financial aid scheme that has left many previously disadvantaged students in debt well after completing their studies (if at all). Politicians, celebrities and even UNCUT's editor-in-chief showed support to the cause; but, it was the efforts of former students of these institutions who offered their professional services free-of-charge that truly demonstrated the importance of education in the struggle against oppression.



A major milestone came on 23 October when President Jacob Zuma announced to media that there would be a 0% increase on all university fees next year. While this is a significant victory for the movement, the struggle for free education is far from over and #FeesMustFall protests continue so every South African child can dare to dream of a future that may seem unattainable to many today. Here is to a brighter future for all.

BLACK AND BROKEN

UNCUT writer [Anelisa Matebese](#) relays a personal story about her struggles attaining an education.



Coming from a family of four children, having been the last born with parents who are pensioners, I got to see my parents' struggle paying for our high school fees and when my older siblings had to go to university, there was no money at all. I had to watch my intelligent sister become a security guard to pay for my college fees because she could never afford to pay for my university-preferred courses; she is just a security guard, after all. I had to deal.

Read Anelisa's full blog on UNCUT Online
(www.lovelife.org.za/UNCUT)

FACT: Only about 5% of apartheid-category black and coloured youth succeed in any form of higher education. *Source: Mail & Guardian*

FACT: The percentage of students who drop out even though their academic records are in good standing is about the same across all race categories, ranging between 7 and 10%. *Source: Mail & Guardian*

UNIVERSITY	2015	2016
North-West University	R40 750	R61 125
University of Pretoria	R30 560	R45 840
University of KZN	R45 860	R68 790
University of Johannesburg	R32 870	R49 305
University of Free State	R26 015	R39 025
University of Cape Town	R46 000	R69 000
Stellenbosch University	R32 534	R48 801

Source: The Star



Champagne Mami @sibugwarube · Oct 18
universities have become businesses, rather than places of knowledge & empowerment, this needs to stop [#FeesMustFall](#)

RETWEETS 68 FAVORITES 23



11:55 PM - 18 Oct 2016 · Details



Cape Town Refugee @Mkhu28 · Oct 19
The irony of a policeman who will never afford to put his kids through varsity throttling a student protesting for [#FeesMustFall](#).

RETWEETS 371 FAVORITES 62



9:48 PM - 19 Oct 2016 · Details



Boo @MsTieghna_Boo · Oct 20
I live in a country where white students are used as shields to stop police from assaulting black students [#FeesMustFall](#) [#BlackLivesMatter](#)

RETWEETS 215 FAVORITES 142



5:34 AM - 20 Oct 2015 · Details



3rd Eye @Ayabukwa_ · Oct 21
We might be put in cells with actual criminals [#FeesMustFall](#)

RETWEETS 209 FAVORITES 13



11:07 AM - 21 Oct 2015 · Details



FEATURE

Lee @ThickLeeyonce · Oct 21
"They call us thugs. Yes, we are thugs, intellectual thugs. We are here to steal education." -Vuyani Pambo

#WitsFeesMustFall #FeesMustFall

RETWEETS
318

FAVORITES
84



9:20 PM · 21 Oct 2015 · Details

SAYLOR TWIFT @ShaiArotic · Oct 22
As much as this is a student revolution; it is also a social media revolution. It's become more reliable than the media. #FeesMustFall

RETWEETS
207

FAVORITES
88



9:00 AM · 22 Oct 2015 · Details

#Beardgang's Finest @TOMolefe · Oct 22
Freedom Charter hangs on #LuthuliHouse. #8: "The doors of learning and culture shall be opened." #FeesMustFall



RETWEETS
172

FAVORITES
39



Lord Voldemort @Ntshale · 13m
"I really didn't expect to have to be teaching my children this" - A mother, teaching her daughter how to avoid teargas sting, in 2015 💔

RETWEETS
4

FAVORITE
1



2:27 PM · 22 Oct 2015 · Details

Beyoncé Pad Thai* @PearlPillay · Oct 23
Someone asked me how my day was. I said I'd been tear gassed and shot at by the government I'd voted for. My heart is sore. #FeesMustFall

RETWEETS
357

FAVORITES
265



1:45 PM · 23 Oct 2015 · Details

It takes a brave person to galvanise a movement. **Katleho Sekhotho** speaks to the four student leaders who launched this monumental campaign against rising university fees.



Nompendulo Mkatshwa

As the newly appointed president of the SRC (Student Representative Council) at the University of the Witwatersrand, this third-year student (BSc in Geography) has arrived at the student political scene with gusto and unapologetic fierceness.

Q: What do you hope to achieve in your personal career? How do you see your future?

A: Studying the discipline of Geography, I am interested in the manner in which the environment is governed. The African continent is rich in minerals and resources, so [we] must find a way to govern these resources in a manner which will be beneficial to the socio-economic development of our continent.

Q. How do you think #FeesMustFall will impact South African society?

A: The idea of #FeesMustFall was to challenge the institutions of higher learning and the government into making a commitment towards free education.

Do we want to allow masses of young people to come into institutions that will reproduce minds that will perpetuate and feed into an economy and work space that is not reflective of the type of economic activity and development that ought to be taking place in Africa or do we want to create an African curricula, taught by African academia for African scholars?

Q:What has been the most promising thing about the #FeesMustFall demonstration?

A: The most promising element of #FeesMustFall is that the youth is not sleeping! *abafuni abalalanga... ba guqe ngama dolo.*

Shaeera Kalla

Former SRC president at the University of the Witwatersrand, Kalla is currently undertaking her Honours degree in Political Sciences. Kalla remains a strong and determined young woman ready to create change in SA.

Q: What do you hope to achieve in your personal career? How do you see your future?

A: Until we have free and quality education, quality health care for all and emancipation from the shackles of poverty for all that live on this beautiful land you will find me on the picket lines fighting.

Q:How do you think #FeesMustFall will impact South African society?

A: In 1994, a commitment was made towards free and quality education. We want it now. The 0% fee increase addresses the symptom and not the problem.

Q:What has been the most promising thing about the #FeesMustFall demonstration?

A: We have shown the power of active students, the power of a

mobilised youth, and this should not be treated lightly or with disdain. There will be many who will say this victory belongs to them, but no, this victory belongs to the students and no one else.



Mcebo Dlamini

Mcebo Dlamini a postgraduate law student at the University of the Witwatersrand. Dlamini is perhaps one of the most recognisable student leaders in South Africa.

During the #FeesMustFall protest, Dlamini stood right in the front of the protest lines.

Q: What do you hope to achieve in your personal career? How do you see your future?

A: Well, I want to be a human rights lawyer. My heart is with the people. I grew up in the townships and I was raised by, sometimes, people that I didn't even know. My major is law, so I want to return the favour back to the people.

Q:How do you think #FeesMustFall will impact South African society?

A: Since 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) has been in the honeymoon stage and they have distanced themselves from the people. We want free education so that we can empower ourselves.

Q:What has been the most promising thing about the #FeesMustFall demonstration?

A: If we are united we will achieve everything. This movement in just two weeks was able to mobilise.

This demonstration was a reminder that we are not free.



Vuyani Pambo

Often described as the soft-spoken, quiet intellectual, Pambo of the People, Vuyani Pambo was part of the ferocious four at the #FeesMustFall campaign. Pambo describes himself as someone who will be wholly immersed in the struggle for black peoples liberation.

Q: What do you hope to achieve in your personal career? How do you see your future?

A: I want to be of service to black people, in all ways possible. A career is not what I'm interested in. I would be happy to die knowing that I served my kin in all possible ways.

Q:How do you think #FeesMustFall will impact South African society?

A: #FeesMustFall is a powerful moment in many ways; [it] has sharpened contradictions and brought with it an awakening. That is why the ANC does not give free education, because it knows that you can't oppress a thinking man.

Q:What has been the most promising thing about the #FeesMustFall demonstration?

A: #FeesMustFall is very important; it reenergises, politicises and reorganises people who have in ordinary circumstances have not responded to injustice and inequality with as much enthusiasm and unity.